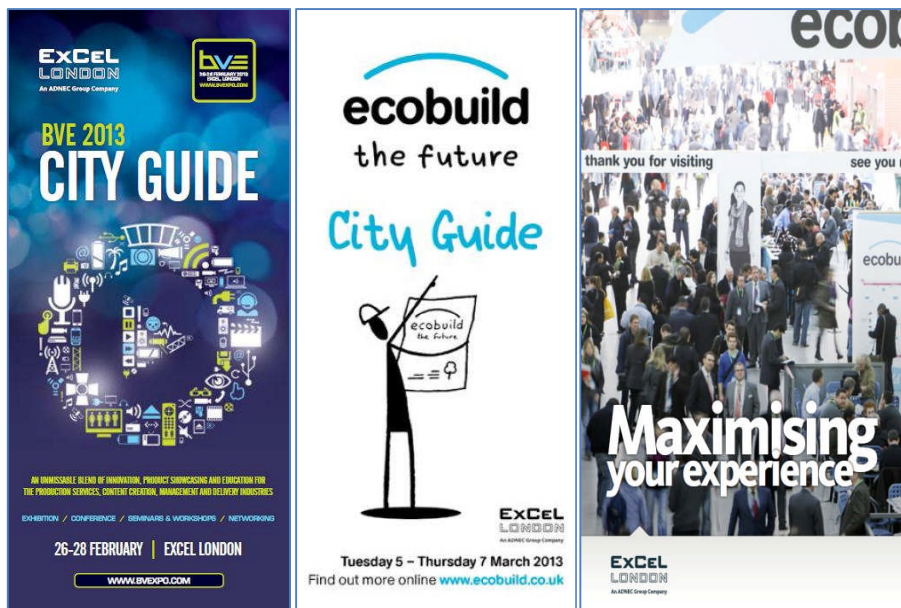




UFI MARKETING AWARD 2013

BEST MARKETING ACTIVITY OF THE YEAR

EXCEL LONDON ENTRY



Objectives

Unlike the majority of our counterparts, we are not state/city owned, so do not have the same support or any kind of subvention. Therefore the Marketing team at ExCeL looked at ways they could proactively develop a convention bureau type offering to add value to our client's events and give them a better experience of coming to London and to the venue to enable us to compete more equally with overseas venues. Our key objectives were to:

- Support shows relocating from other UK venues and also to help the sales team win new business by providing subvention style support
- We wanted our organisers to feel that the venue genuinely cared about their event and for their exhibitors and visitors to feel reassured that the event relocating from another venue to ExCeL London was the right move.
- Create new initiatives to add value to our clients and stand us apart.
- Enhance the experience for visitors as they recognise that a successful show is not just focused on the event, but also what happens after the show closes.
- Take the hard work out of organising an event in London, so that our clients get the best experience.

Actions

We came up with a themed approach called 'Maximising your Experience.' This is a marketing initiative to share best practice between organisers, a concierge, networking group of key London stakeholders and a consultancy approach to ensure our visitors, clients, delegates and exhibitors get the very best experience not just at ExCeL, but whilst they are in London. Integrating ExCeL teams within our client's teams is the way we do business – our client's success is our success. In 2012 the marketing team introduced 'Maximising Your Experience' as an umbrella programme for a number of initiatives including:

- A new City Guide for organisers
- "Maximising your Experience" guide
- Continued to grow the Supporters Club to add value

1. City Guide

During 2012 we developed a comprehensive City Guide for our trade organisers. The branded guide gives information about transport, hotels, bars, restaurants, attractions and venues for hire to give visitors and exhibitors a practical guide of what to do, where to and how to get around when they come to ExCeL. It is funded purely by advertising so that we can print enough copies free of charge but a pdf version is also provided so that organisers can use them on their website 3 months or more prior to their event. It has been very popular and the feedback has been incredibly positive and has enhanced our brand reputation for customer excellence.

- We designed the guide in conjunction with organisers after speaking to them all face to face to ensure it would meet their own objectives as well as our objectives as a venue
- Challenge – we had to sell advertising in the guide – commercialising our supporters club for the first time
- We reassured our supporters that they would get a positive ROI by advertising in the guide and that the guide would help show a joined up welcome from London

2. Maximising Your Experience

This is a practical guide providing suggestions & tips to get the most out of bringing events to our venue. It uses our experience of transferring, launching and hosting events at ExCeL and

includes – introductions to local partners, travel tips, marketing tools available, after hours, discounts and examples of best practice from other organisers.

3. ExCeL Supporters Club

Unlike other venues, we have developed very close relationships with our local stakeholders to create an 'events micro destination' in East London. This allows us to work with our stakeholders to give a London welcome and better experience to our customers and visitors. The Supporters Club includes over 120 bars, restaurants, transport providers, attractions and party venues. Three times a year we bring together these supporters and our clients to network and discuss ways they can work together. This has been hugely successful because it takes away the hard work from the clients and allows them to meet relevant contacts that will work with them to enhance their event. A unique 'After Hours' leaflet with bars and restaurants has also been produced as a result of the Supporters Club and can be used by our customers. To be included in the leaflet, all partners have to offer a discount or incentive to our customers.

4. Concierge

The marketing team also works as a concierge service for clients and their key exhibitors. We recommend venues, itineraries and help put them in touch with the right contacts in London to deliver the extra curricular events.

Results

- Our objectives were exceeded, not only did we achieve more revenue for the guide than target but we also received an extremely positive response from clients.
- Our clients benefited by having a positive message to give to their stakeholders and a tangible product which could be distributed before the event and during the event. As the City Guide was branded for each event the organisers often passed off the guide as their own work enhancing their own standing within their industries.
- It has enhanced ExCeL and London as a city's standing within the events community.
- Working with the exhibitions events sales teams to help them sell the marketing support we offer, has enabled them to grow by 30% in the last twelve months and attract the higher profile events.
- Organisers see what we offer as a financial contribution towards their event the support adds value and makes us more comparable/cost effective.
- One of the major benefits is the time saving and ensuring that they get the right solutions to their needs, which exceeds expectations for them as a client, their exhibitors and visitors.
- Ultimately this achieved a new ecosystem within East London, of businesses who wanted to work together proactively to help sell our destination and work together to give our clients the best possible experience of London, so that they came again. It is a new way of doing business that involves our stakeholders and brings them on the journey with our clients, which has also had a huge influence and effect on economic impact to the area and more businesses wanting to invest and relocate to East London.
- All of the activities support our ability to sell the ExCeL experience and differentiate ourselves from our competitors nationally and internationally. By developing initiatives that support exhibitors and visitors experience, also helps our clients grow their shows year on year and hopefully stand size, because we work closely as a team to help them get the right audience and provide the right environment for them to do business.